

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Students equipped for summer missions

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

"We didn't get to bed until 2 a.m.," the sophomore said, "and I stayed awake for the whole conference. It was that good."

This backhanded compliment was a testimony to the excitement generated by LTC 2002, the Leadership Training Conference for Mississippi Baptist Student Union (BSU) students and leaders held April 5-7 at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

According to Weaver McCracken, associate director of the Collegiate Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, the LTC is one of the largest conferences hosted annually at Gulfshore Assembly. Over 600 participants were involved in the event, representing an estimated 32 campuses across the state.

"Our intent for the conference is to bring together leaders from campuses to orient and train them for the coming year," McCracken said. "This conference includes local and state-elected leaders, as well as summer missionaries. We use this time to commission all of them — the leaders and the missionaries."

The conference was a combination of small and large group activities blended with praise and worship, inspirational and motivational speakers, and plenty of opportunities for recreation and fellowship.

Ricky Young, student minister at First Church, Jackson, provided praise and worship. Acts Too, a drama team from Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville, added a theatrical twist.

Tim Elmore, of EQUIP, in Atlanta, Ga., carried most of the teaching responsibilities of the large group training. According to McCracken, EQUIP is part of John Maxwell's ENJOY group. EQUIP is tasked with developing leaders in undeveloped cultures, urban areas, and among college campuses.

Elmore used his Friday evening session to provide a portrait of healthy, effective leadership. Elmore said, "There are three common threads we find woven throughout all of the great leaders in history: leaders possess and communicate a picture of a goal for others; they understand and implement the steps to reach the goal; and they mobilize and equip people to join them in the cause."

"For effective, healthy leadership you must have character, perspective, courage, and favor," Elmore stated.

Saturday evening was the commissioning service for the campus student leaders and summer missionaries.

When asked what attracted her to summer missions, Rebecca Harding, a student at Delta State University (DSU) in Cleveland, said, "I wanted to help in ministry, and I wanted to get outside the Bible belt — God seemed to be leading me to Arizona, and that's where I'm headed."

Ashley Skelton, another DSU student, said, "I just needed to move outside my comfort zone and do something for God." Skelton will be serving in California.



WHAT ARE WE TO DO? — Emmett Dunn of the Baptist World Alliance in Washington, D.C., challenges students to ask themselves, "What is it that Jesus is asking me to do?" during the 2002 Leadership Training Conference at Gulfshore Assembly, April 5-7. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Emmett Dunn of the Baptist World Alliance in Washington, D.C., gave the challenge to all the summer missionaries and campus leaders. Dunn, a Liberian, used the biblical account of the Good Samaritan as the basis of his comments, but approached the text from the standpoint of "the man in the ditch — the man who was attacked by robbers."

"The question isn't so much 'who is my neighbor?'" stated Dunn. "A better question would be, 'What is it that Jesus is asking me to do?'"

MSU student Jason Goolsby, outgoing president of Mississippi BSU, gave a leadership challenge to the campus leaders and summer missionaries. "To lead, you've got to be bold," Goolsby stated.

"You've got to be real. You've got to invest in people. Jesus was the perfect example of how to invest in others," Goolsby pointed out.



YUMMY! — Carlos Rodriguez, a student at Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg, samples indigenous food from South Korea where he will be serving as a summer missionary. Rodriguez was one of over 600 students at the Leadership Training Conference at Gulfshore Assembly. (BR special photo)

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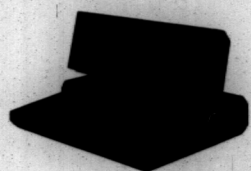
Miss. CP down for month

Mississippi Baptists gave \$2,318,821 through the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) for the work of the Lord in March, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the CP funds. The March total was 4.5% below the previous month and .6% below the amount given in March 2001. A total of \$2,543,558 is needed each month to meet the record 2002 Mississippi CP budget of \$30,522,692, approved by messengers to the 2001 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting, but an all-time record month in January (\$3,389,338) has for now kept the 2002 budget on track. March also marked the twentieth straight month that Mississippi CP giving has topped two million dollars. Mississippi CP helps fund such programs as FAITH training April 18 at First Church, Saltillo; the National Missionary Parent Fellowship meeting April 19 at Camp Garaywa in Clinton; Lad/Dad Crusader Day April 20 at Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko; and the Outreach/Evangelism Tools Tour April 22 at Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch.

SBC CP also takes dip

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) dipped 1.67% last month compared to March 2001. However, year-to-date support for CP Missions remains 2.82% ahead of totals at this same point last year, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. March's \$14,064,084.99 in CP gifts to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America dipped \$239,210.07 below March 2001 gifts of \$14,303,295.06. Designated gifts of \$20,581,220.37 in March, meanwhile, were 19.14% below March 2001's \$25,451,336.81, a decrease of \$4,870,116.44. In year-to-date CP giving, \$91,742,280.47 has been received, compared with \$89,228,523.62 in 2000-01, an increase of 2.82% or \$2,513,756.85. The SBC operates on an Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year. In year-to-date designated giving, \$105,121,659.53 has been received, compared with \$104,287,690.68 in 2000-01, an increase of .8% or \$833,968.85. For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the March receipts of \$14,064,084.99 were 94.66% of the budgeted \$14,858,239.92, or \$794,154.93 under the budget goal.

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Can it happen to us?

In this day of startling sexual deviancy, none has had the gripping effect of the current scandal engulfing the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. The national news media daily bring a stream of new allegations that a small minority of Roman Catholic priests — several dozen of the 47,000 active American priests — have sexually molested an untold number of children during their official service as representatives of the church.

There's no denying the facts. Expert observers predict monetary settlements and judgments for such conduct will easily reach one billion dollars. Some of the priests have already been convicted and are serving prison time. Other priests have been charged and await their judicial fate. Still others are just now being put in the spotlight by accusers who are, in many cases, adults who have finally found the inner strength to come forward and name their alleged tormentors.

The very thought is nauseating, that people who are charged with the high responsibility of reflecting Jesus Christ to a lost world would instead exploit the natural respect and trust of their position for perverse sexual gratification. Even more nauseating is the fact that the smallest and most vulnerable among us were intentionally targeted as the objects of such degradation.

There is simply no way to gauge the ruin among the victims. Many of them speak publicly of an insurmountable

inability to develop a relationship with God. Many of them likewise have failed in attempts to establish and maintain close relationships with other people where trust and faith are crucial. Surely there are some victims who have taken their own lives over the shame and humiliation they felt.

The problem must not be new; Jesus himself spoke about it when he warned in Mark 9:42 (NIV), *And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.*

One of the most horrifying aspects of the scandal has to be the manner in which church officials covered up the priestly abuses and, in numerous cases, simply removed the offending priests to another diocese to continue their perversions with a fresh flock of victims. This apparently occurred over and over again.

Associated Press reported this week that the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston had evidence Father Paul Shanley spoke in favor of sexual relations between men and boys at a 1979 conference that apparently led to the formation of the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA).

Archdiocese documents turned over to the court in a child sex abuse lawsuit involving Shanley indicate church officials first received complaints about him as far back as 1967. Twelve years later, a Boston attorney alerted the archdiocese to Shanley's attendance at the NAMBLA conference but church leaders continued to do nothing about Shanley — except to transfer him without restrictions to other parishes

— until nearly four decades later when he was charged with child rape at his final station in California.

As stomach-churning as the revelations are, Baptists should take no relief in the fact that the scandal is happening to someone else. In recent years a Mississippi Baptist pastor has been convicted of possessing child pornography, and a lay youth worker in a Mississippi Baptist church has been convicted of sexual misconduct at church.

Far too often, Baptist churches quietly dismiss offenders and go about their business, leaving the offenders to repeat the dastardly acts somewhere else. Far too often, Baptist churches fail to conduct criminal background checks on people who want to work with children and youth.

A Mississippi Baptist preschool minister reported some years back that more than a few prospective volunteers for such service politely changed their mind when she mentioned that a personal criminal background check would be required. That should tell us all we need to know about the potential for this scandal to penetrate our churches.

Think about it. Where else, other than church, could a pervert find such a large collection of targets gathered in such a trusting environment with so little oversight? The Roman Catholic Church is discovering the answer to that question, to their everlasting regret.

We had better open our eyes to the reality around us, or we too will soon find ourselves trying to dig our way out of that same deep, dark pit. Let's not allow it to happen to us.

GUEST OPINION:



\$400 million church offering scandal

By David Michel
Associate Executive Director
Miss. Baptist Convention Bd.

gize, but I refuse to take the blame for the whole \$400 million. If you're a pastor who didn't preach on tithing last year, then you are responsible. If you are a Sunday School teacher who referred only to what the Bible says on money, then you are responsible. If you're a pastor who failed to mentor a younger yokefellow in Christian financial management, then you are responsible. If you're a parent who hasn't taught your children to give a dime out of every dollar, then you are guilty. If you're a church treasurer who chokes down budget spending without calling for increased faithfulness in tithes and offerings, then you

are also responsible. Do these allegations seem harsh? Not in light of the biblical declaration "The tithe is holy unto the Lord" (Leviticus 27:30).

What can be done? I don't argue with the numbers. Statistics can be used and misused. The worst abuse occurs when we allow an argument about the numbers to distract attention from the need for more generous giving. The data in the highlighted box may not be exact, but it is clear that giving is less than half of what it should have been.

◆ Let's express spiritual outrage. We often express gratitude for tithers, but more church members give nothing than we

care to admit. Why do we allow that to pass without spiritual indignation? Our Lord is worthy of the very best. Tithing is the least we can do. Surely the Holy Spirit can embolden us to speak the truth in love.

◆ Let's get excited about the possibilities. A \$400 million reward awaits those churches which will raise giving expectations for their members. Extra staff, more adequate facilities, and expanded ministries could be afforded by every congregation in the state if offerings doubled. Lost people could be reached for Jesus. Career missionaries could be commissioned for overseas and North American assignments. Baptist colleges could be revitalized, and local associations re-energized. Cooperative Program ministries could become the spiritual catalyst for calling out 25,000 Great Commissionaries (short-term mission volunteers) every year. Their experiences could revolutionize churches by bringing global vision and missions compassion to the forefront.

What are your concerns for Christ's Kingdom? Are there new ministries your congregation should pursue? Are there benevolences or educational considerations, or mission enterprises which Mississippi Baptists should address? April 14th is designated Cooperative Program Sunday all across the Southern Baptist Convention. Why not use that day to "enlarge our tents" and envision a \$400 million future? Let's see what the Lord will lead us to do next.

GREAT COMMISSION DOLLARS

Mississippi Baptist Resident Membership	716,725
Median Household Size in Persons	2.63
Mississippi Baptist Households	272,519
Average Household Income	\$28,530
Potential Tithes	\$777,667,887
Actual Church Receipts Last Year	\$377,005,100
Missing Offerings	\$400,612,787

Data drawn from 2000 US Census and Annual Church Profile

30 million deaf are waiting for Good News

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — One people group numbering 30 million worldwide will never hear the Good News of God's love, even if a missionary knocks on their door.

They will never hear because they are deaf. Isolated socially and immersed in a culture radically different from the hearing world, the deaf have little hope of even learning about Christ, much less understanding the gospel and receiving him as Lord and Savior.

That's why five leaders from the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf (SBCD) met in March with leaders from the International Mission Board (IMB) for the first Global Summit Meeting on Deaf Church Planting.

In that meeting, the SBCD task force and IMB leaders forged a partnership to direct more missionary outreach to deaf populations worldwide. They discussed the possibility of developing training methods and creating a center to prepare Southern Baptists to witness more effectively to deaf people. They also talked about setting up a network that could match missionary requests for outreach teams with church teams ready to serve.

Members of the 73 deaf Southern Baptist congregations and 555 deaf ministries probably don't realize how powerful their witness overseas would be, said Phillip Easterling, pastor of Birmingham (Ala.) Community Deaf Church.

"Deaf-to-deaf witnessing is most effective because of the understanding of the language and the culture that deaf people share," Easterling said.



TEACHING WITH LOVE — Vesta Sauter (center), Southern Baptist missionary to the deaf in the Czech Republic, teaches sign language to deaf children, using teddy bears as teaching aids. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

"Sometimes it's hard for a hearing person to win deaf people to Christ but when it's a deaf person to another deaf person, it's much quicker. It's like a magnet, something draws them."

"I have been to Romania six times for missions projects. Each time, deaf people would listen to our Bible teaching for four or five hours on a Sunday morning, then eat lunch with us and come back for more teaching. They would follow us to our rooms at night and sit on the floor and listen to our stories, stay until the early hours of the morning, sometimes even sleeping on the floor, because we were all deaf."

Deaf people have a credibility with other deaf that hearing people will never gain, no matter how well they speak sign

language, said Jeff Jackson, pastor to the deaf at First Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

He noted, for example, that a hearing missionary who served among the deaf in Haiti saw a dozen saved in 10-12 years. When an outreach team of deaf Christians came from the United States, however, 100 deaf in the community came to Christ in just one week.

Members of a deaf club in the Czech Republic were fascinated when a wheelchair-bound American Christian came to visit them and share her testimony in sign language, Easterling said.

The Czech group was stunned that 90-year-old Lillian Beard would travel all the way from Houston, Texas. They wanted to see her passport to prove her age and took pictures of her because they knew others wouldn't believe them.

Several of the deaf noticed Beard demonstrated an unusual spirit of joy. One of them, an older woman named Anna, knelt in front of her and asked, "Why do you have that glow on your face? Older people here don't have that."

When Beard replied that her

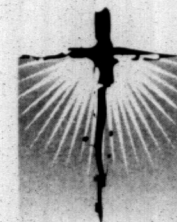
joy came from having Jesus in her life, Anna said, "I want that," and prayed to receive Christ.

"We want to encourage deaf churches to move up to a new level, become more focused on missions," said Aric Randolph of New Life Deaf Fellowship in Fort Worth, Texas. "We want them to move past the stage of supporting missions and learn how to work in missions themselves."

"Deaf Southern Baptists can reach their own people through their own language," added Daniel Johnson, a minister to the deaf at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Wilson, N.C.

"The deaf are empowered to witness to their own people and plant churches. They don't have to depend on hearing people to do it. They can do it themselves."

• For information on outreach to the Deaf, contact Phillip Easterling at wpeasterling@cs.com, Aric Randolph at aricnldf@aol.com, Bob Barker at bbark7@aol.com, or Vesta Sauter at GoDeaf@att-global.net.



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THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
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LifeWay Best Sellers

HARDBACK

1. Bringing Up Boys, James Dobson (Tyndale House)
2. Prayer of Jabez for Women, Darlene Wilkinson (Multnomah)
3. Walking Wisely, Charles Stanley (Nelson)
4. Traveling Light, Max Lucado (Nelson)
5. Praying God's Word, Beth Moore (B&H)
6. Prayer of Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
7. Wild at Heart, John Eldredge (Nelson)
8. Night Light, James and Shirley Dobson (Multnomah)
9. Secrets of the Vine, Bruce Wilkinson (Multnomah)
10. He Chose Nails, Max Lucado (Nelson)

PAPERBACK

1. Power of a Praying Wife, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House Publishers)
2. Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman (Moody Press)
3. Power of a Praying Husband, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House Publishers)
4. Power of a Praying Parent, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House Publishers)
5. Praying God's Will for your Life, Stormie Omartian (Harvest House Publishers)
6. Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs (Waterbrook Press)
7. Case for Faith, Lee Strobel (Zondervan)
8. Humor for a Woman's Heart, Various (Howard Publishing)
9. Sacred Romance, Curtis Brent & John Eldredge (Nelson)
10. Experiencing God Revs With Study Questions, Henry Blackaby (B&H)

Looking back

10 years ago

Fifteen Southern Baptist missionaries serving in Europe have resigned so far this month, Foreign Mission Board officials confirm. At least two of the missionaries are citing recent actions by the board's "fundamental-conservative" trustees as decisive in their resigning.

20 years ago

Gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions show a 25% increase over offerings received the previous year, according to William G. Tanner, president of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Atlanta.

50 years ago

A display ad in The Baptist Record reads: "To relieve misery of colds, take 666. Liquid or tablets, same fast results."

Cathys describe business ties to Kingdom

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Corporate America has a bad reputation. The

recent collapse of energy giant Enron has done nothing to help this "looking out for number one" image.

However, one American company stands in stark contrast to the rest, refusing to buy into the "success at any cost" way of doing business. Chick-

fil-A Corporation was started on Christian principles back in 1946 and has managed to remain true to the conviction of its founder, Truett Cathy.

Truett Cathy has instilled the tradition of honoring God in all they do in his children Dan, Bubba, and Trudy. Dan is the president and Bubba is the senior vice president. Trudy didn't join the family business. She and her husband, John White, served for 10 years as missionaries to Brazil.

Bubba and his wife Cindy delivered the Tharp Lecture on the campus of New Orleans Seminary (NOBS) on March 26.

Bubba began his remarks by noting how thankful he is for the Christian family in which he grew up, crediting his parents for making God a priority in their home as well as their business. Their influence helped keep him away from harmful behaviors and to make the decision to follow Christ at an early age. His voice was tinged with emotion as he read the inscription in the Bible his parents gave him when he was 16.

"This book will keep you from sin, and sin will keep you from this book, Love, Mom and Dad," he read.

Cathy also stressed the importance of finding a mission in life. "We remind folks that there's more to life than just business," Bubba said. "There's more to life than just making money selling sandwiches. We hope to make a difference in people's spiritual life as well."

"You all are going into the ministry in some facet, and I applaud you for that," Bubba said. "It was through the ministry of J.S. Brown that I became a Christian. I can't tell you the influence people in the ministry have had on me."

Cindy Cathy said she believes God has placed her husband in the business world for a reason. "He got a call from the Lord; I think just as clear as you have a call to ministry, he was called into business to be a Christian man in business," she said.

"God has blessed him. He has an evangelist's heart. Anybody he comes in contact with, he's sharing Jesus with them."



Cindy and Bubba Cathy

Women on Mission celebration slated

Harrisburg Church in Tupelo will be the site of an April 19-20 Women on Mission celebration entitled, "Beyond Belief: Transforming the Ordinary to the Extraordinary."

The celebration will begin at 6:30 p.m. on April 19 with a banquet and fashion show featuring music by Belinda Black of Hattiesburg and a keynote address by Sandra Nash of Clinton, state coordinator for the Christian Women's Job Corps. Nash is a former missionary and also served for five years as president of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU).

The celebration will reconvene at 8:15 a.m. on April 20 for a continental breakfast and a devotional time with Black and Nash. After the breakfast, a pair of workshops will be conducted:

- **Seeking Wisdom:** Becoming a More Godly Woman, with Edna Ellison of Union, S.C. Ellison, the author of two books on mentoring, recently retired from the national WMU office in Birmingham. She also served for several years as a staffer for Mississippi WMU.

- **Transforming 24 Hours into Extraordinary Days,** with Judith Edwards of Albuquerque, N.M. Edwards serves as director of women's ministries for the New Mexico Baptist Convention.

Tickets for the weekend are \$10 per person. Child care is available upon request. For more information, contact Carol Carpenter at (662) 842-5991.

ANTS KNOW

Spring is here and the ants are out. Easter has passed, Daylight Savings Time is in place, and the ants have arrived! The first ants I observed this spring, or at least the first ones I stopped and noticed, I actually almost missed seeing. When I glanced down what I saw was the remains of a large bug erratically scooting along the sidewalk. That is what caught my eye, so I leaned over and noticed that this was a dead bug and it was being pushed and pulled along by several ants.

My initial thought, as I observed what was taking place, was to step on the bug carcass and at the same time send the little ants on to their future reward. I didn't do that; instead, I listened to the Scripture and the instructions of the brilliant King Solomon when he said, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Proverbs 6:8-9).

I remembered also that in Proverbs 30:25, it says, "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." Isn't that amazing — the brilliant leader of Israel instructed us to learn from these little ants. As I paused for a few moments on this beautiful spring day and watched a deceased bug being pulled along by little ants, I learned some valuable lessons.

Here, sit down for a few moments and let me share some lessons I learned as I watched my little ant friends. Let's think together about the Cooperative Program. Over 75 years ago Southern Baptists adopted a plan of financial support of ministries and missions that literally has been the envy of the rest of the religious world. The Cooperative Program enables everybody at every church to be a part of something hundreds, thousands,



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

or millions of times bigger than they are by themselves.

- **The first lesson I learned was about "Cooperation."** As I watched the little ants, there were six, seven, or eight that were involved in the pushing and pulling of getting the job done. They would move a quarter of an inch, then they would scurry around changing places. Occasionally, only one of the ants would be holding onto the huge victim, but nothing would be happening because one was unable to do anything by himself. Even when a buddy would help out, it was not enough.

Ant power is hard to measure, but as three, four, or five would grab hold, something would begin to happen. We have some great churches across our state and across our convention, and many of them are doing tremendous works as we seek to build the Kingdom of our Lord, but no one church is able to do everything.

We also have some great churches that are small in number and resources, yet many of them recognize that they can be great in vision and participation in order to reach a community, a continent, and a globe for Jesus. It only takes cooperation.

Because we choose to join together in a cooperative effort, we are able to reach out in the name of Jesus and touch thousands of areas where we have never been and many places we can't even pronounce.

From retreat centers and camps where hundreds of boys and girls come to know Jesus and many others come to find direction for their life, to child-

care for families that are in crisis and unable to provide, through our Baptist colleges and our Baptist work on campuses across the state, through summer missionaries and volunteer missions that reach out from our churches in our state to the four points of the compass — Mississippi Baptists join together in reaching out to a world through our International Mission Board and North American Mission Board. You and I are part of a network of seeing that the message of Jesus and his love is provided everywhere and in every language.

The little ants provided a reminder that cooperation is not just about me, it is about we! It is not just about getting what I want, but it's about what will bless others.

- **The second thing that I learned was about "Multiplication."** As best I could tell not one, not two, not three, and I do not believe that even four ants were able to move the soon to be "banquet" bug. It was that fifth and sixth ant that made it happen. As they took hold, pushing, shoving, and struggling, they each multiplied the strength and ability of the others. I couldn't hear what they were saying to each other, but I do not believe that any of them was saying, "Here, I'll do it by myself." No — this was a lesson in multiplication.

The reason working together is so important is because that is the way God has designed us. One of the early mission intentions of God is stated in Genesis 1 when he tells Abraham that he will bless him so that he can be a

blessing to others. God does not bless us with abilities, resources, and strength just for us to use it on ourselves. With increased strength comes the increased responsibility to use more strength to help others. When we take hold with others we multiply what they can do and we multiply what we are able to do.

One person is not a choir. One person can not even stand up and sing four-part harmony; but, joining with others, what a wonderful thing happens — beauty of sound and celebration is multiplied. It is the same with the Cooperative Program.

- **The final lesson that I learned concerned "Elevation."** As I watched these little ants no one seemed to be in charge but everyone was participating in the same event, moving in the same direction for the same good and goal. I am not sure how ants communicate or who tells them, "Let's work together to get this done," but obviously, to those of us outside the ant world, it is an unseen force — an undetected director in charge.

The person in charge reaches far beyond any organization, structure, or position. It reaches all the way up to the lordship of Jesus Christ. That, my friends, is the genius of the Cooperative Program that many people overlook and fail to celebrate. We give because he is in charge. We give beyond ourselves, beyond our churches, beyond our county boundaries, beyond our state, and beyond our national borders because Jesus gave that far.

The Cooperative Program works not because of the genius of Southern Baptists, but because of the unseen yet living Lord who reigns and rules in heart, after heart, after heart, and in church, after church, after church. To some folks we may appear to be like those little ants, not making much of a difference, but under the lordship and leading of Jesus we have, we do, and we will make a difference.

What the ants know, we now know. So, let's celebrate the Cooperative Program!

Church places missions first; sees upswing

ELLENSBURG, Wash. (BP) — Chestnut Street Church caught the vision, made the commitment and saw God move.

At the time, Chestnut Street was a small, struggling group who were giving to missions out of their excess, and too often there was no excess.

As pastor Frank Johnson tells the story, "They [the church] made a decision: We're going to honor God with our world missions commitment. We're going to take him at his word: 'Give and it will be given to you.' They gave to missions first and began to see God begin to work."

The church's commitment to Cooperative Program (CP) Missions dates back 20 years or more. When Johnson was called as pastor in 1992, Chestnut Street Church was giving 11% regularly through CP for Southern Baptists' global missions causes. This year Chestnut Street Church is giving 14.25%.

The church today reflects God's continuing blessing. At least 175 people gather in two Sunday morning services. Ministry to college students thrives. A longtime commitment to ministry through English as a Second Language (ESL) recently was reenergized. The church is in the second of a four-year commitment to ministry to immigrant groups in Paris, France. Church members work in tandem with other Christian groups in community ministry. The mission church it started at the other end of the county is poised to become the state's first full-fledged resort ministry. And Chestnut Street's \$196,000 budget reflects its continuing commitment to missions: A full 35% or more is designated for missions causes.

"They weren't making a real connection in other classes so with some gentle care we invited them to help us start a new class to reach some of their friends and people they knew," Johnson said. "That has worked out really well. It's pretty cool. The folk who come attend very regularly and

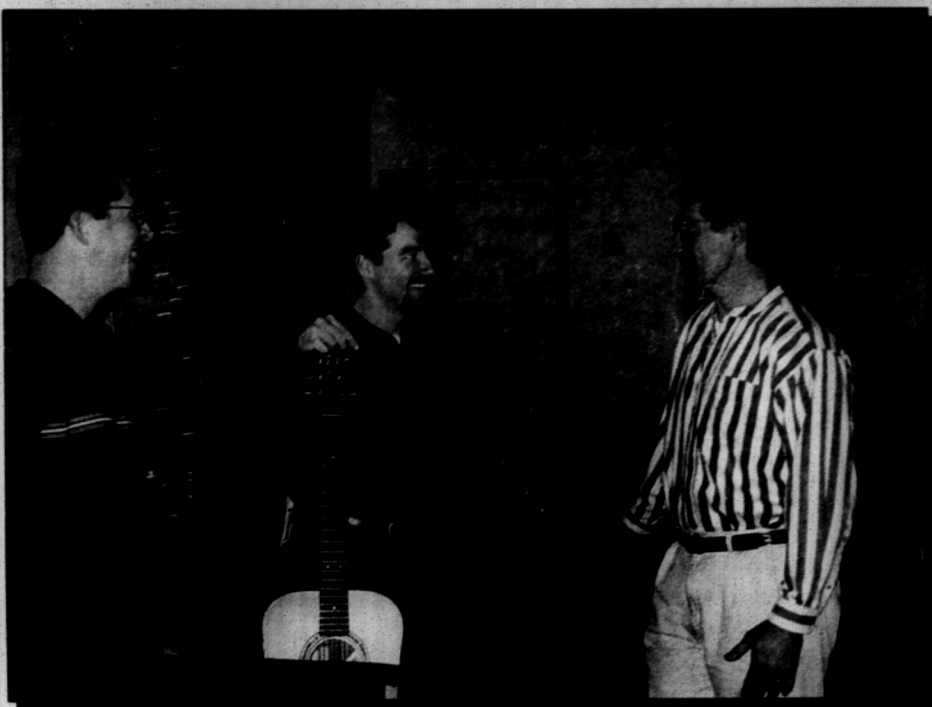
seem to get a lot out of it."

Ellensburg is a county seat town nestled in a wide valley halfway between Seattle and Spokane. The town's population is about 15,000 including about 7,500 students at Central Washington University. Perhaps 350 students are from Asia.

Ellensburg's economy is based on the university, hay farming, and vegetable packing, which draws in about 1,000 seasonal workers for six months a year, primarily Hispanics from south Texas.

"We feel some compulsion to reach out to those God has placed in our area," Johnson said. "They're here and they have needs and not too much is being done to meet them. It's a kind of missions-in-your-backyard kind of opportunity."

For international students, Chestnut Street Church's "Welcome to America parties" are in addition to ESL classes. The church offers ESL Sunday School with materials produced by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)



MISSIONS-FOCUSED — Staff members at Chestnut Street Church who have helped the Ellensburg, Wash., congregation focus on missions include (from left) Keith Bradford, bivocational associate pastor of student ministry; Jeremy Johnson, assistant student minister, team leader of the musical leadership team and son of pastor Frank Johnson. (BP photo)

North American Mission Board (NAMB), along with midweek language-training classes. "It's kind of a nifty curriculum," Johnson said. "It takes them slowly through the Gospel of Mark. They read a passage in their own Bible and then read it in English, so they're practicing English but also reading it in their own language in case they don't get the point in English."

The church also keeps Bibles in English, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean available for students who don't yet have their own Bibles.

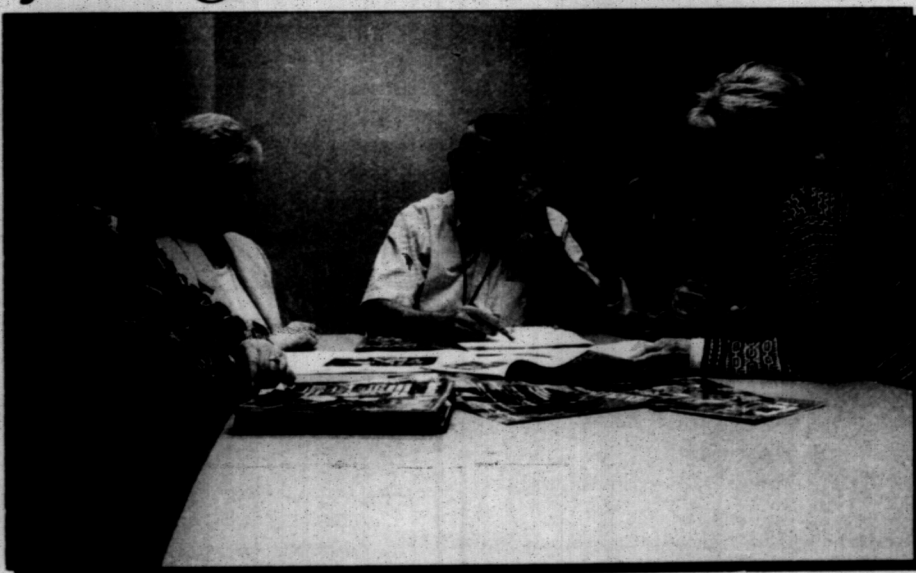
GBC gives more power to trustees

ATLANTA (BP) — The bylaws of Brewton-Parker College and Shorter College have been amended to allow trustees the option of removing one of their own for just cause, according to action approved by the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) executive committee. The executive committee voted unanimously March 12 to change the bylaws of the two Baptist-affiliated colleges to meet Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements.

In January, the Shorter trustees' executive committee rescinded the action they took in November that shifted the college's assets and control to a self-perpetuating foundation board. Shorter's trustees had quietly voted to become self-perpetuating, citing the trustees' lack of authority to remove one of its own as a reason.

LifeWay magazine for senior churchgoers turns 25

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — In 1977, Jimmy Carter became president, the New York Yankees won the World Series and Mature Living was born. In 2002, George W. Bush is president, the New York Yankees lost the 2001 World Series, and Mature Living will turn 25, a milestone anniversary for a magazine geared toward readers a few years past a 25th birthday.



"It marks a milestone that the magazine is able to sustain and still attract generations of readers," said David Seay, the new editor-in-chief of the magazine that reaches 335,000 readers every month. "The circulation figures from the very beginning exceeded what they expected."

When the magazine began production in April 1977, circulation potential for the first issue was estimated at 40,000, but it actually reached 66,643, Seay said.

Since then, the LifeWay Christian Resources-produced magazine focusing on seniors continued to grow and evolve, said

WRITING FOR SENIORS — The Mature Living staff: From left, Brenda Shoemaker, technical specialist; Judy Pregel, senior editor; David Seay, editor-in-chief; David Wilson, graphic designer; and Patsy Robison, copy editor. (BP Photo by Terri Lackey)

Judy Pregel, senior editor of Mature Living. "Most of the early articles were nostalgic, and while that's still included, there's much more," she said.

Mature Living now regularly includes articles on issues such as grandparenting, travel, gardening, and crafts. Encouraging readers to maintain an active lifestyle is becoming increasingly important as baby boomers move toward the senior generation, Pregel said.

"The senior adult population is the largest growing segment of our population today, an important group of people —

they've been through the Second World War and some of them grew up in the Depression, but today we're addressing needs that I think younger seniors are facing," she said.

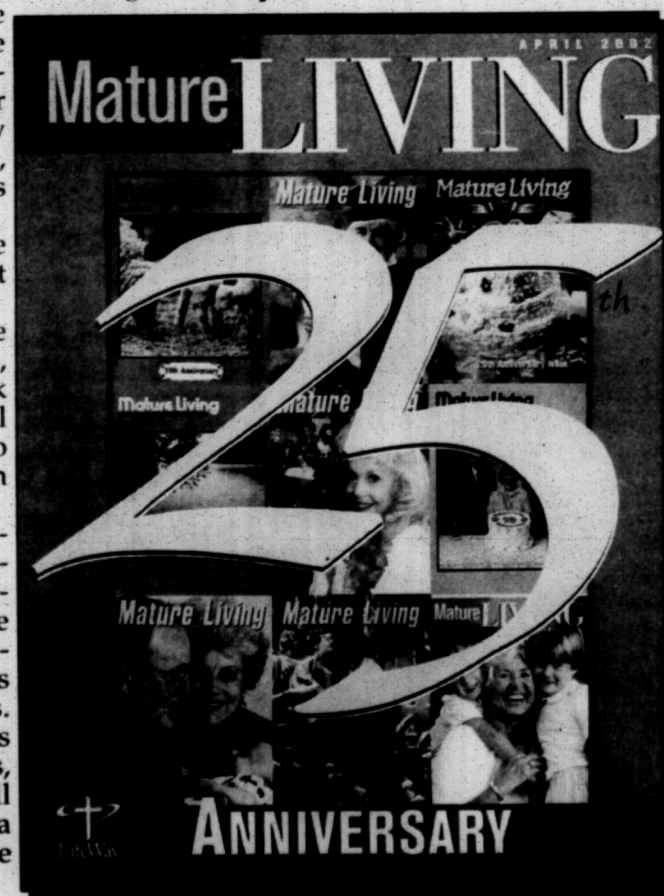
Seay sees the changing face of the senior generation both as a challenge and an opportunity for Mature Living. "The

biggest challenge we face is making sure we minister to both the current generation of senior adults and to the baby boomers. On Jan. 1, 2001, baby boomers started turning 55.

He said they will have a different attitude about the senior years.

"They will be more active than their parents, not ready to sit and rock away those years. We'll need to find a way to meet the needs of both generations."

Mature Living celebrates its 25th anniversary in April with a special cover featuring the original cover, plus previous anniversary issues and selected covers. Well-known Christians such as Dave Thomas, Andy Griffith, Bill Gaither, and Donna Douglas have graced the magazine's cover.



NAMES IN THE NEWS

Homecomings

Harmony (Carroll): April 28; 124th anniversary; 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds at noon; Ken Gower, pastor.

Cross Roads, Pelahatchie, April 28, 11 a.m. service, followed by dinner on the grounds; For additional information, call (601) 546-2297.



The Myers and Rich



Wallace and Thompson

Tom Myers recently celebrated his 15th anniversary as minister of senior adults and outreach at Prentiss Church, Prentiss. Pictured (from left) are Angie Myers, Tom Myers, and Randall Rich, pastor.

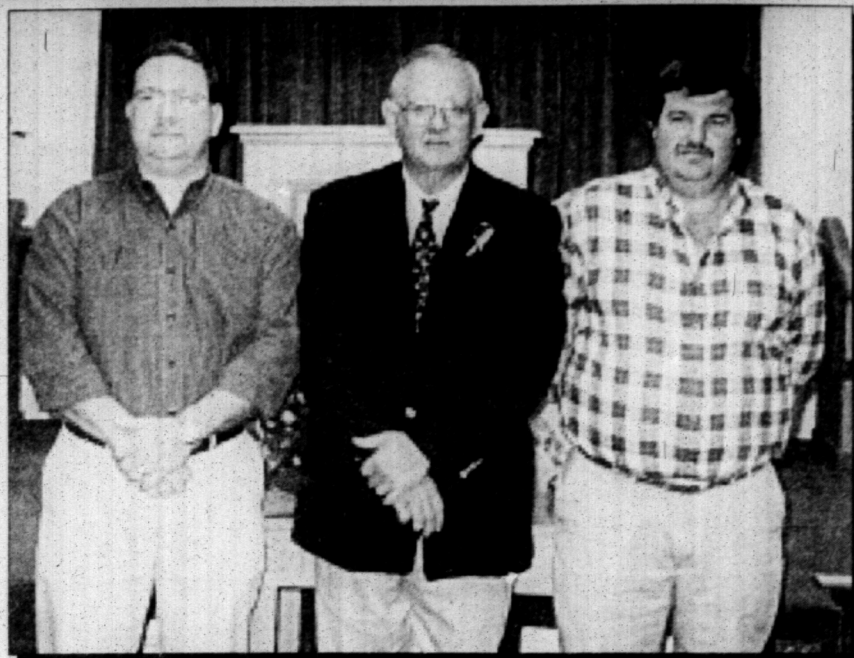
Southway Church, Brookhaven, licensed Kevin Thompson to the ministry, on Jan. 27. He is presently studying at New Orleans Seminary extension in Jackson. Thompson is available for pulpit supply and can be contacted at (601) 833-0958. Pictured (from left) are

Leon Wallace, pastor; and Thompson.

Mantee Church, Mantee, licensed William Carpenter to the ministry on March 17. He will be serving as a BSU summer missionary to Omaha, Neb., this summer. Pictured (from left) are William Carpenter; Mark Jones, pastor; and James Carpenter, father of William Carpenter.



W. Carpenter, Jones, and J. Carpenter



Hart, Garner, and Runnels

New Sardis Church, Mount Olive, recently held deacon ordination services for J. R. Hart and Duran Runnels. Pictured (from left) are Hart; James Garner, pastor; and Runnels.

recently held for Bill Bailey and Craig Edwards at Eastlawn Church, Pascagoula. Bailey was ordained as associate pastor and Edwards as associate pastor and music. Pictured (from left) are Bailey; Jack House, pastor; and Edwards.

Ordination services were



Bailey, House, and Edwards

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